Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Doctoral Scholarship Application Fall 2021

Yvonne Rondeau, Scholarship Administrative Officer
Dr. Steve Perlman, NSERC Coach
One application, two awards

When you complete the NSERC doctoral scholarship application you will be considered for:

• The Canada Graduate Scholarship-Doctoral, (CGSD) $35,000/year for up to three years, recipients must do their doctoral degree at a Canadian university

• NSERC Postgraduate Scholarship-Doctoral, (PGSD) $21,000/year for up to three years, may do their doctoral degree at an international university provided they have a previous degree from a Canadian university
Eligibility – Subject Matter

There are three federal research councils:

- Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council (NSERC)
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

- You need to apply to the correct council which is determined by the subject matter of your research
- If you are not sure, talk to a Scholarship Officer and your academic supervisor
- No appeals based on subject matter
Eligibility – Applicant Criteria

• be a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident of Canada or a Protected Person under subsection 95(2) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada), as of the application deadline

• Have not held a doctoral level scholarship previously from NSERC, CIHR or SSHRC

Number of months of study

• Eligibility for CGSD & PGSD is based on the number of months of full-time study completed toward the degree for which you are requesting funding by December 31 of the calendar year of application (Dec. 31, 2021). Two terms of part-time study count as one term of full-time study.

• Note: The agencies count all studies toward the doctoral degree for which funding is requested, whether or not they were completed at the degree-granting institution.
Eligibility – Applicant Criteria

- have completed **no more than 24 months** of full-time study in your doctoral program by December 31 of the calendar year of application if previously enrolled in a graduate program.
- have completed **no more than 36 months** of full-time study in your doctoral program by December 31 of the calendar year of application if enrolled in a joint program; for example, MD/PhD, MA/PhD
- have completed **no more than 36 months** of full-time study in your doctoral program by December 31 of the calendar year of application if enrolled directly from a bachelor’s to a PhD program (not previously enrolled in a graduate program) - direct-entry applicants must be enrolled in their doctoral program at the time of application.
Eligibility – Applicant Criteria

Direct Entry from Bachelor - You may be eligible to apply to the CGSM program for your first year of doctoral funding. Applying for a CGS, if you are eligible, will maximize your potential period of funding. You are responsible for choosing the type of award for which you apply.

Fast-track and joint programs
If you were registered in a master’s program and subsequently transferred to a doctoral program (fast-track), the months of study completed are calculated starting from the date on which you transferred into the doctoral program.

If you are registered in a doctoral program, and a master’s degree is obtained as part of the program (for example, MA/PhD), the months of study are calculated starting from the date on which you are officially registered in the joint program (including the master’s portion of the program).
Eligibility – A Few Notes

• You do not need a first class grade point average (GPA) to apply for an NSERC CGSD/PGSD
  • Grades are considered in the evaluation of applications but are not an eligibility requirement

• Your doctoral program must include a significant research component that leads to completion of a thesis, major research project, dissertation, scholarly publication – joint programs with a professional degree, or clinically oriented programs of study are only eligible if they have a significant autonomous research component
Selection Criteria – research ability and potential 50%

• quality of research proposal
  • specific, focused and feasible research question(s) and objective(s)
  • clear description of the proposed methodology
  • significance and expected contributions to research

• relevant training, such as academic training, lived experience and traditional teachings

• research experience and achievements relative to the applicant’s stage of study, lived experience and knowledge systems

• quality of contributions and extent to which they advance the field of research—contributions may include publications, patents, reports, posters, abstracts, monographs, presentations, creative outputs, knowledge translation outputs, community products, etc.

• demonstration of sound judgment and ability to think critically

• demonstration of responsible and ethical research conduct, including honest and thoughtful inquiry, rigorous analysis, commitment to safety and to the dissemination of research results and adherence to the use of professional standards

• enthusiasm for research, originality, initiative, autonomy, relevant community involvement and outreach

• ability or potential to communicate theoretical, technical and/or scientific concepts clearly and logically in written and oral formats
Selection Criteria – relevant experience & achievements obtained within and beyond academic 50%

- scholarships, awards and distinctions (amount, duration and prestige)
- academic record
  - transcripts
  - duration of previous studies
  - program requirements and courses pursued
  - course load
  - relative standing in program (if available)
- professional, academic and extracurricular activities as well as collaborations with supervisors, colleagues, peers, students and members of the community, such as
  - teaching, mentoring, supervising and/or coaching
  - managing projects
  - participating in science and/or research promotion
  - participating in community outreach, volunteer work and/or civic engagement
  - chairing committees and/or organizing conferences and meetings
  - participating in departmental or institutional organizations, associations, societies and/or clubs
Selection Criteria

• As you work on your application, refer back to the selection criteria to be sure you are providing enough information so that reviewers can see how you meet, and better yet exceed the selection criteria.

• When you write your research proposal, contributions section, research experience section – any part where you get to comment, describe or elaborate on your accomplishments – this is where you demonstrate that you can communicate clearly by the quality of your writing.
The Process

UVic can nominate 29 students for NSERC doctoral scholarships in fall 2021 and nominees are chosen through an on-campus competition
(Applications submitted by Indigenous students that are considered competitive will be submitted over and above the 29 permitted by the UVic quota)

• Students complete the NSERC On-line application (Form 201 - instructions) – but cannot and should not click Submit right away (Yvonne will tell you when)

• You must complete the application online and submit a complete set of your post-secondary transcripts to Yvonne by 4:30 pm Tuesday Oct. 5 (you can either drop off paper transcripts, OR email your transcripts which must be scanned into one complete, correctly formatted PDF)

• FGS will check your application for completeness, eligibility, and will advise you of any corrections you may need to make, and upload your transcripts – this will happen over a two week period October 6 to 19
The Process

• October 20th FGS will forward NSERC doctoral applications to academic departments, to review before returning them to FGS

• Academic departments may withdraw the application of any student they do not consider a competitive applicant; if this happens your department must notify you

• Once your application is complete – meaning transcripts are attached and all corrections are done, FGS will let you know when you can SUBMIT your application – **Wait until you are instructed to Submit**
The Process

• Applications are read and scored according to the prescribed selection criteria by a group of UVic faculty who are NSERC researchers

• Applicants will be notified before the end of November, if you were nominated or not

• FGS Scholarship Officers will submit nominated candidates’ applications to NSERC for federal review process by November 21

• Winners are notified by NSERC in April 2022
How to Apply

• Application is a web based form accessible through NSERC On-line System
• You need to register and then you can create, edit and save your NSERC application
• Save frequently because the application may time out
• Remember your password – password resets are possible but can take time
• Use the correct application form - Form 201
• If you are not sure about any part of the application or the instructions contact Yvonne scholoff@uvic.ca
NSERC On-line System

Accessibility Notice
If you cannot access the following content, please contact the On-line Services Helpdesk by e-mail at webapp@nserc-ecrc.gc.ca or by telephone at 613-957-4273. Indicate the e-mail address and telephone number where you can be reached.

PILOT SITE NOTICE
Our Pilot Site is no longer available. The On-line System may be used for training purposes; however, test applications must not be submitted to NSERC.

For Authorized Institutional Representatives: Before you register to access the On-line System or the Financial Data Submission and Reconciliation (FDSR) System, ensure that you have completed, signed and emailed the pertinent registration form to NSERC and read the instructions and the frequently asked questions provided. You will find the forms, instructions and frequently asked questions, for one or the other system, at the On-line System Overview and FDSR Overview pages.

On-line System Users
Select On-line System Login to create or access an application.

Financial Data Submission and Reconciliation
The Financial Data Submission and Reconciliation (FDSR) System is for academic institution officials who electronically transmit their annual financial data.
NSERC Application login page

Security, Privacy and Use and Disclosure of Information
Before using NSERC’s On-Line System, please read the following documents and register your acceptance below:

- NSERC’s Security Statement and details on the retention periods of the data;
- NSERC’s statement on the federal Access to Information Act and Privacy Act;
- For applicants and co-applicants: Use and Disclosure of Personal Information Provided to NSERC; and
- For referees: Instructions to Referees on the Privacy Act, Confidentiality and the Use and Disclosure of Information.

When you login and use this system, it means that you understand and accept that these policies and conditions apply.

Login
You will be automatically logged out of the system if there has not been any activity (e.g., Save, Preview, etc.) for an extended period of time. To avoid having to login again, we recommend that you select Save every 10 to 15 minutes.

Account name
(20 char)

Password
(8 characters long, must contain at least one special character: ! $ % ^ & { ] } ; & , - ] ) and no spaces may contain numbers [0-9], lower and upper case letters (i.e., A-Z). Please note that your password is case sensitive (10 char)

Submit Clear Fields

Date Modified: 2013-11-05

Top of Page Important Notices
Selecting the Correct Form
Selecting the Correct Form

Applications

Your in-progress and completed applications are listed in the table below (see Security Statement and Access to Information Act and Privacy Act for detailed information). To create a new application, select the appropriate form from the drop-down box. To edit, preview/print or verify the completeness of a given application, click on the appropriate button below. Note that the Scholarships & Fellowships applications must be submitted electronically.

Application forms and related literature are revised annually and made available a few months prior to the application deadline indicated in the program description. If the name of the program to which you wish to apply does not appear in the list upon creation of your application on the On-line System, the form is not currently available. The forms for programs that do not have set deadline dates will remain accessible at all times.

Applicants interested in applying for support at the master's level should refer to the CGS M Program description.

Form 201 - (PGS D & PDF) Create

Scholarships & Fellowships
User Profile & Self-Identification

• Before beginning the application there is a user profile section with various self-identification questions which was updated this year (2021)

• Equity, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) strengthen research communities and the quality, social relevance and impact of research.

• If you want to learn more about the EDI/Self-identification questions you can visit NSERC’s [FAQ on Self-Identification](#)

• You have to answer all of the questions, HOWEVER “prefer not to answer” is an option for each questions

• Indigenous applicants who want their application to be considered over and above the UVic quota (29) must self-identify as Indigenous

• When you finish User Profile & Self-ID section, there is a button to return you to the econsole where you can proceed with accessing Form 201 (application)
List for a Complete Application

1. Application profile
2. Personal profile
3. Addresses
4. Academic background
5. Academic, research and other relevant work experience
6. Awards
7. Proposed location(s) of tenure
8. Scholarship or fellowship information
9. Theses completed or in progress
10. Keywords and research subject code
11. Diversity considerations in research design
12. Outline of proposed research (attachment; two pages)
13. Bibliography (attachment; five pages)
14. Justification for eligibility of proposed research (attachment; one page)
15. Contributions and statements (attachment; two pages)
16. Transcripts or proof of registration (attachment)
17. Reports on the applicant
Academic Background – Common Questions

- Include only current and past programs, if you are registered in a program starting in the fall session of the year of application, it must be included here.

- For degree programs you have completed, provide the date on which all requirements of the degree were met, including successful defence and submission of the corrected copy of your thesis - compare dates to your official transcripts.

- If you began a master’s degree and transferred to a doctoral degree without completing the master’s, there is a check box to indicate this, and the start date of your PhD will be the date on which you were first officially registered in your PhD program.

- This page of the application must be completed before you invite the individual designated by the faculty of graduate studies (or its equivalent) to scan and upload your transcripts.
Other Attachments & Sections of Note

Some sections of the application provide great opportunities to highlight your experience and successes in and beyond academia

• Work Experience – academic, research and work experience, paid or volunteer
• Awards – list of competitive awards won, *bursaries and travel grants don’t count*
• Thesis – chance to summarize previous research/degree, if not previous master’s degree, use honours thesis, if no master’s or honours thesis, you may describe another major research project, or work done to date on doctoral degree – without repeating what is in your research proposal
• Research subject code – determines which committee will review your application at federal level if you are nominated by Uvic – there is a list online
• Contributions & Statement 2 pages – describe contributions to research & other significant accomplishments, headings and what you can include here are described in the instructions
Diversity considerations in your research

• In the Diversity considerations in research design module of your application, you will be asked if diversity considerations have been taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings related to your proposed research.

• If you answer “Yes,” you should ensure that diversity considerations are incorporated into your research proposal, as appropriate.

• If you answer “No,” you will be provided with a text box to explain why diversity considerations are not relevant to your proposed research. If diversity considerations are not relevant to your proposed research, their lack of inclusion will not negatively impact the evaluation of your proposal.
Presentation Standards for Attachments

• Explain any acronyms and abbreviations fully;
• Pages must be 8 ½" x 11" (216mm x 279mm);
• Pages must be single-spaced, with no more than six lines of type per inch;
• All text must be in 12 pt Times New Roman font;
• Condensed fonts will not be accepted;
• All text should be black, and no colour images should be used;*
• Margins must be set at a minimum of ¾" (1.87 cm);
• Your name must appear outside the set margins of the page, at the top right corner of every page;
• For multi-page attachments, pages must be numbered sequentially; and
• If you have supporting documents written in a language other than English or French, you are required to provide NSERC with a certified translation of the document.
Presentation Standards for Attachments

• All attachments must be converted to Portable Document Format (PDF) before they can be attached to the electronic application. The conversion process varies with the operating system and word processing software you are using.

• Instructions for attaching PDF documents are included in the NSERC CGSD/PGSD instructions - follow the link to the Presentation Standards.

• There are also presentation and PDF standards instructions in section of the application where relevant, (outline of proposed research, bibliography, etc.)
Outline of Proposed Research – 2 pages

• Provide a detailed, concise description of your research project for the period during which you will hold the award
• Provide enough background to place your research in context in your field of study
• State the significance of your research to field(s), and if applicable beyond (industry, health, social benefits)
• State your objective, methods, and procedures to be used
• Write your proposal in clear, plain language and avoid jargon.
• Your application will be reviewed by a selection committee covering a broad discipline category.
Outline of Proposed Research – 2 pages

• You should not repeat the information found in the “Theses completed or in progress” section of the application, but may refer to it.

• NSERC expects applicants to write their own research project independently, and that ideas and/or text belonging to others are properly referenced.

• Include all relevant information in the outline. Do not refer members to URLs or other publications for supplemental information. Such additional information will not be reviewed by members.

• If the proposed research is a continuation of your thesis, clearly state the differences between work done for your thesis and the research activities outlined in this proposal.
Outline of Proposed Research

• Remember that your reviewers will come from very different fields and will be reading lots and lots of other applications
• Avoid jargon, avoid getting bogged down in minutiae
• Should be understandable to experts & non-experts
• Need to show that you can formulate an interesting question and convince the reader that it is interesting and that you are using the right approach to tackle the problem
• **What** is the question? What has been done before? **Why** is it interesting/important? **How** are you going to solve the problem?
Bibliography – 5 pages

• NSERC expects applicants to properly reference ideas or text belonging to others.

• Use this section to list references to works that are cited in or directly relevant to your application (that is, do not list additional or unnecessary references to fill up the space).

• Follow the citation conventions that are appropriate to your research discipline or field.

• Demonstrate that you are aware of foundational and current works in your field of study and research
Justification for Eligibility of Proposed Research – Optional attachment 1 page

• Complete this section if your research is in a discipline that falls under the mandate of more than one research council (e.g. psychology, geography, exercise science, environmental studies, biochemistry etc.)

• Explain why you have chosen to apply to NSERC, this will only be used by NSERC staff to confirm eligibility and will not be shared with review committee

Before doing this – read the subject matter guidelines online – Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency
Report on the applicant (you)

Each application submitted to NSERC must be accompanied by two Reports on the Applicant (references)

• The reports must be completed by persons capable of making an informed assessment

• One report should be from a person very familiar with your research and other abilities, e.g., current academic research supervisor or industrial supervisor (in the case of co-op students); previous academic research, industrial or USRA supervisor

• The second report should be from a person sufficiently familiar with your research and other abilities to provide a meaningful commentary

• Note: A Report on the Applicant cannot be completed by a proposed supervisor unless that person is currently your supervisor or has been your supervisor in the past

• If your current or past supervisor is unable to provide you with a Report on the Applicant, you may use the Special Circumstances section to provide an explanation.
Report on the applicant (you)

What you should do:

• Contact your referees early to ensure they are willing to complete a report for you

• In the Report on the Applicant page of your application, enter the name and email address of each of the referees who will be completing a report, as well as the deadline on which you would like the report to be completed, which you select from a pop-up calendar. *Application deadline is Tuesday October 5th, so ask referees to complete the assessment by Wednesday September 29th*

• Once the information is saved, the system will generate an email to each referee inviting them to complete a Report on the Applicant.

• Contact your referees to inform them that you have sent them a report to complete

• The status of the request can be verified in this section of your application

• Your application will remain incomplete until both reports have been submitted – if not completed by Oct. 5 your application will be withdrawn from the competition
Report on the applicant (you)

Provide your references with the following:

• a copy of your list of research contributions
• a copy of your research proposal
• a one-page resume of awards, conferences, etc.
• List of work or volunteer experience relevant to your degree that they may be able to comment on
• a summary of the NSERC selection criteria
Choosing Referees

Very important!

• Choose your referees wisely and carefully – these should include at least one person who has supervised your research, and should include people who are familiar with the application system and who care about you.

• Do not ask other graduate students/postdocs/TA’s/ or someone who taught you in just one course more than a year ago.

• Referees will be asked to comment/rank you on all criteria.

• A strong reference will be specific, not vague.

• Reference letters are great places to add/emphasize ‘extra’ things that are not easy to put in other places in the applications.

• Help your referees by providing them with specific information and by involving them in the process – don’t be shy about communicating with them throughout the process.
Transcripts/Proof of Registration

• For fall 2021 NSERC will not immediately reject applications that include unofficial transcripts in lieu of official transcripts if you cannot access official copies due to the impact of Covid-19 – NSERC may request official copies at a later date.

• Best option is to get official transcripts which are defined as transcripts issued by the Registrar’s Office, preferably paper copies (password protected digital copies created issues uploading in fall 2020) – transcripts used for admission to UVic are not accessible to FGS.

• All transcript must be complete and up to date and you must include your UVic transcript, even if you have not completed courses yet – proof of registration and number of months of study.

• Order transcripts to be sent to you; do not have them sent to FGS office or your academic department – they will likely be lost in the “adminisphere”.

• You are responsible to deliver your transcripts to FGS (drop off paper copies or email correctly formatted PDF copies to Yvonne by the application deadline of Oct. 5th 4:30 pm).

• You will appoint a designate who will upload your transcripts - this year it will be Yvonne Rondeau scholoff@uvic.ca
Special Circumstances

• Completed in the application – 2300 characters

• Describe any special considerations that have had an effect on your performance or productivity, delays in disseminating your research, taking longer to complete previous degrees, health problems, family responsibilities, parental leave, disabilities, administrative interruptions or other applicable circumstance

• Be clear, provide time frames, and include just the facts – avoid identifying other individuals in this section

• This section can also be used to describe the impact of COVID-19 on any aspect of the application or your research that caused, delays, disruptions or otherwise affected the performance on which the assessment for funding will be made.
Your NSERC Coach – Dr. Steve Perlman

My job is to: look over your research proposal and provide feedback, as a neutral third-party, familiar with academia.

• Email me a complete draft of your proposal and application well ahead of the internal deadline

• I will review and make track changes

• We will then meet to discuss the edits.
Things you should do this week (if you haven’t already)

• Go to NSERC workshop!
• Go online and start navigating NSERC application pages to get a sense of what is needed for the application
• Decide on and contact referees
• Get examples of successful past applications if possible
• Make a timeline and start outline of your proposal
Research proposal

• Give yourself plenty of time – write and re-write, read and re-read, get feedback

• **Follow all instructions** re: length, headers, font etc…

• You are expected to write your own proposal – ideas and words should be your own

• Don’t worry if things end up changing down the road (i.e. different project etc…)
General advice

• START working on your application today

• Work on some aspect of the application everyday

• Early feedback by trusted reviewers is KEY (not just me)
  • Try to get feedback from experts and non-experts
Use the Resources Available

• Scholarship Administrative Officer, Yvonne Rondeau scholoff@uvic.ca
• NSERC Coach Dr. Steve Perlman stevep@uvic.ca
• NSERC Website – Application instructions, policy on subject matter eligibility, award holders guide
• Graduate Advisor in your academic unit
• Presentation slides online FGS Finances go to Doctoral Scholarship tab